A token of gratitude

The International Committee has demonstrated its gratitude to Dr. Roland Marti who leaves it today, having reached the retiring age after being a delegate for many years. The Committee presented him with its silver medal during the ICRC Assembly on 3 July 1974.

On that occasion, the President of the ICRC, Mr. Eric Martin, reviewed Dr. Marti's humanitarian work. The International Committee called upon Dr. Marti in 1936 to represent it in Spain where civil war had broken out. It again had recourse to his services when the Second World War erupted. Alongside Dr. Marcel Junod, he was appointed head of the delegation in Germany where, with a courageous team of delegates, they held high the flag of the Red Cross, visiting thousands of prisoner-of-war and civilian internee camps, pleading the cause of the war's victims, directing on the spot the largest relief undertaking ever known to the Red Cross, organizing delivery of parcels to some two million captives for five years and ensuring that they received supplies when all organization was disrupted.

After peace was restored, Dr. Marti carried out seven further missions in various countries until 1952, when he was appointed head of services for UNICEF in Africa. This was another opportunity for him to dedicate himself to a cause and to prove his constant desire to help others. In 1970, the ICRC was pleased to be able once again to count on his invaluable services.

As the ICRC medical adviser, he carried out thirteen missions for the Red Cross in several countries, visiting detainees, negotiating with the authorities, providing comfort and medical assistance to those in need. Quite recently, he was in Pakistan where, as an ICRC delegate, he was concerned with the arrangements for the repatriation of Pakistani prisoners of war from India.

Such were some aspects of a career dedicated to the service of others, and in presenting the medal to Dr. Marti, Mr. Eric Martin expressed the profound gratitude of the International Committee of the Red Cross.